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## THE PERCEPTION OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN MAINTAINING THE HARMONIZATION IN ACEH: AN ANALYSIS OF *SIYASAH SYAR'IIYAH*

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### ABSTRACT

*Aceh currently experiences dynamic situations within inter-and intra-religious adherents. Aceh, however, has proved itself throughout the history as the reliable place for any religious adherents. In order to restore the Aceh condition to its normal state, the cooperation between the government and the religious leaders will be among the important influencing factors. In this study, the role of the leaders in regard to the harmonization of the religious followers in Aceh. Findings showed that, first, the condition of Aceh was still perceived as harmonious, although with a little dynamic. Second, the conflicts occurred among religions in Aceh were generally caused by the external factors, although a small portion of the economic and socio-cultural aspects also had some influence. And, third, the religious leaders have not worked optimally yet to sustain the harmonization in Aceh. It's need the leaders because, first, they have more knowledge on the condition and aspiration of their followers; second, they can share information on the followers' real condition for the governor's consideration in the new regulations, programs, and so forth; and third, they possess a sacred authority that can be used to calm any conflict.*

*Key Words : perception, religious leaders, harmonization, siyasah syar'iiyah*

### 1. Introductions

Aceh Singkil experienced unrest on Tuesday, October 13, 2015. Although the unrest had subsided, the security managed to control the condition with much difficulty. The angry mass moved from Simpang Kanan, and then the church in Suka Makmur Villlage, Gunung Meriah, was burnt. According to some local paper, the unrest happened because the local community was not satisfied with the agreement of the local government, *ulema* (Islamic scholar) figures and non-govermental organizations in terms of the established church (Dede Rosadi, 2015).

In response to the unrest in Singkil, the religious leaders should have positioned an important figure to maintain the peace in Aceh. As of now, the conflict has caused many

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victims. According to Fajri Alihar, as quoted by the Jakarta Post, the interrelation among communities in the regency was harmonious. The situation was ruined because the regency administration was absent in handling the waves of protests against the churches they complained illegal. Religion, however, was not the source of conflict (Erika, [www.thejakartapost.com](http://www.thejakartapost.com)).

Some conflicts also happened within intra-religious adherents. In Aceh, the *ahl al-sunnah wal jam'ah* (Aswaja) and Wahabi dispute has enhanced the conflict cases in Aceh. As a result, Baiturrahman, the historical and provincial mosque in Aceh was also targeted. Serambi Indonesia noted that at least there were three incidents related to the management of Masjid Raya (the Great Mosque of) Baiturrahman. First, on June 19, 2015, the followers (*jama'ah*) from Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh (HUDA) (Aceh Islamic Scholars Association), Majelis Ulama Nanggroe Aceh (MUNA) (State of Aceh Islamic Scholars Council), and Front Pembela Islam (FPI) (Islamic Defenders Front) came to take charge of the management of Baiturrahman, of which the changes included the use of cane during sermon and the calling of prayer (*adhan*) twice in Friday prayer (Bakri, 2015). Second, on September 10, 2015, the *dayah ulema* and *santri* (students) claimed to be of the Aswaja made long march in Banda Aceh and forced the governor to sign the 13 petitions. Third, on October 1, 2015, the vice governor of Aceh signed the 12 points proposed by a mass who called themselves Pencinta Aswaja (Aswaja devotees) (Bakri, 2015).

The dispute, according to al-Chaidar, was due to Aceh having a conservative attitude of which the phenomenon known as religion re-conservation, while on the other hand, modernism penetrated massively in Aceh. He said that the wahabism or salafism was rejected during the Baiturrahman case in Aceh. This was a kind of escapism which views that take-over of the mosque is based on pragmatic rituals and clashes within a civilization (Al-Chaidar, 2015).

In 2013, as many as 20 people took by force the pulpit (*mimbar*) of Masjid Jama'atul Thullab in Arongan, Bireuen. This group entered the mosque and asked the people to stop the Friday prayer. While the request was ignored by the people, the group went on to take over the pulpit and carried it out the mosque despite many trying to block their effort. Even so, the sermon kept continued, and the preacher (*khatib*) sat on the plastic chair instead. Sources mentioned that the issue occurred because the group did not want the Friday congregated prayer to be held in there since another mosque was available around 700 meters from the disputed mosque, located in Balee Village (Hasyim, 2013).

In this case, however, religious leaders have a great and important role to guide their religious adherents (*ummah*). They are the only figures whom their *ummah* are willing to listen to although various interests may still be present to affect the *ummah* condition.

Today in Indonesia, such conflicts have been spread throughout the nation. Optimizing the function of religious leaders in order to keep calm any religion-based conflict is considered a huge step for a better Indonesia. Therefore, with a diversity of religions namely, Islam, Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, Budhha, and Confucianism, Indonesia needs a system to prevent similar conditions to occur.

In the basis of *siyasah syar'iyah*, the government should intervene in order to stabilize the situation and condition of its society. Religion as a part of the nation's identity is a sensitive issue, and thus, the religious leaders play a huge role in cases of religion-based conflict. Religious leaders can be defined as persons who are trusted by their *ummah* to lead the religious institutions and the community and to keep the sacred religious symbols.

In the history of Islam, 'Umar ibn Khattab made sure any religious adherents could implement their own religious teachings in their life. 'Umar ibn Khattab was very strict in implementing the freedom principle in his country. This was because Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h (peace be upon him) had taught the early Moslems how to appreciate each other, even to the non-believers.

The rationale of the significance of the religious leaders' presence can be understood from when the leaders are able to spread the wisdom and the peace; the *ummah* will also do as what their leaders have done. If the leaders are not involved in building the harmony among religions, the peaceful condition will not happen within the society.

Religion is inseparably attached to politics as well as often put at the forefront in mobilizing people to enrich support the politician to take over resourceful regions or even states (Bakaki Andrew, n.y).

Involvement of faith-based actors in conflict resolution process is not a new phenomenon. Faith-based actors including clergy (e.g., the pope, priests, imams, rabbis), religiously inspired leaders (e.g., Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr.), and religiously motivated movements and organizations have always played a role in resolving conflicts (Bercivitch, 2009).

How is the role of religious leaders to prevent and solve conflict? In the perspective of *siyasah syar'iiyah*, the leaders are authorized to do or not to do things in order to make sure

*al-maslahah* can be applied. They should consider making the regulation which responds to the condition and situation.

Based on above discussions, the present paper wanted to figure out how the current condition of religious adherents' harmony in Aceh was, what the factors leading to disharmony among the adherents in Aceh were, and how the role of the religious leaders in order to keep the harmony among the adherents in Aceh was.

*Siyasah syar'iiyah* has several definitions. First, a policy used for public interest. Policy makers must ensure that what they regulate refers exactly to the needs of the society. Second, the policy taken among the possible alternatives is the one closer to *jalb al-maslahah* and *daf' al-mafسادah*. Third, *siyasah* is within the scope of *ijtihad* which deals with any public affair-related issue and with no explicit *dalil* (statement) from the Quran and the Hadith, thus it is referred to the policy of the *imam* (leader). Therefore, in terms of *siyasah syar'iiyah*, the *ulema* utilize the methods of *qiyas* and *maslahah al-mursalah* (Djaluli, 2003).

*Siyasah al-Syar'iiyah* refers to the *haqiqat* (essence) of something. First, it is related to managing and regulating the human life. Second, the management and regulation should be executed by *uli al-amr*. Third, the aim is to create the *al-maslahah* (benefits) and avoid the *madharrah* (harms). And fourth, it is not contradicted with the *shariah* (Islamic law) (Djaluli, 2003).

*Maslahah* means any benefit to the public which not only relates to matters not regulated by the precise texts of law, but also to the matters subjected to such regulation; so much so that it is legitimate to make it prevail over precise rules or over conflicting or contradicting regulations related to five major interests (religion, physical integrity, descendence, patrimony, and mental faculty) (Masud, 2000).

The meaning of *siyasah syar'iiyah* is the policy of the leader to keep *al-maslahah* among human beings or to apply the law of Allah, and to keep morals in domestic affairs as far as it does not contradict with the *nash*, explicitly or implicitly (Qasim, n.y).

In the case of *siyasah*, it should be led by the one who has *amanah* (trust) to perform his obligation toward his *ummah*, and realize their daily needs (Al-Matiri, 2013). The points that should be paid attention in *al-siyasah al-syar'iiyah* include the government should give freedom for rights, freedom in choice of the religion, as well as freedom in thought and economy for any individual or community. The point here is there is no force in embracing any

religion or opinion, or taking off the property for the other without one's permission (al-Syahud, 2012).

*Siyasah Syar'iiyah* gives the authority to the leader to stipulate the bill or regulation which contains the *al-maslahah*. According to al-Mawardi, there were at least 20 points which were related to *siyasah syar'iiyah*, of which he called as *wilayah*. Among the important *wilayah* were *wilayat al-qada'* (authority to stipulate the judge who decides the case in the court if some disputes happened), *wilayah al-niqabah* (authority to do census on the population), *fi ma takhtatlif al-ahkam min al-bilad* (authority to stipulate the authorized district), and *wilayat fi ahkam al-jara'im* (authority to stipulate the law of either *hudud* (regulated punishment stipulated in the Quran and Hadits) or *ta'ziri* (punishment authorized to the leaders), and others (al-Mawardi, 2006).

The leaders have the authority to stipulate the law based on *firasat* (sensitivity of thought), *amarat* (the symbols and characters), and *qara'in* (the hidden indications) (Ibn Qayyim, 2005). Therefore, *siyasah syar'iiyah* focuses more on *fiqh dusturi* (comprehension of the law), *mali* (financial), *dawli* (international), and *harbi* with theory of *qiyas*, *maslahah*, *sad al-dhari'ah*, *al-'urf*, and *istihsan*, also *kuliyyah fihiyyah*. The basic in *imamah* (leadership) and *wilayah* (authority) was *al-syura* (discussion) and *ridha* (pleasure). The principle was mentioned in Qs. Al-Syura: 38 as well as Qs. Ali 'Imran: 159. This principle was also found in the Hadiths among them: Hadith on inviting to make consultation with Prophet p.b.u.h (al-Bukhari, no. 4178). In terms of *hadith ifk* (gossip spread by the hypocrite on 'Aisyah r.a), the Messenger p.b.u.h invited people to consult with him (al-Bukhari, no. 4757). The Messenger p.b.u.h also invited people to the consultation on the day of Badr War (Ahmad, no. 13296).

The important points that the leaders are obliged to implement include, first, moderate attitude, called as *wasata*. This is referred to the capacity to understand the context, priority scales in the collective life, natural law as a given from God, contribution to each other, and understanding the religion text comprehensively (Fauzi, 2015). Second, open for a dialog. Third, tolerance that refers to awareness of variety and diversity, function of religion, no force on faith, and humbling and cooperating in the world affairs. And, forth, understand the religion (Fauzi, 2015).

The function of the rulers in Islam as stated in the Quran is: "Those (Muslim leaders) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) enjoin *Iqamat al-Salah* (i.e to perform the five

compulsory congregational *Salah* (prayers)), pay *Zakah* (alms), and they enjoin *al-ma'ruf* (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid *al-munkar* (i.e. disbelief, polytheism and all that Islam has forbidden) (i.e. they make the Qur'an the law of their country in all spheres of life.) and with Allah rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures)".

The verse shows that the rulers have to develop those virtues which Allah expects him to have and to be enriched by them, and to enjoin *ma'ruf* and forbid *munkar*. Therefore, from the Islamic perspective, the leader of a state is governed by a sense of trust, whereby he is responsible to those by whom he is appointed and accountable before Allah for whatever is entrusted to him. This sphere of mutual responsibility may generate a harmonious interaction, a feeling of social solidarity, love and help, and an obligation to respect and maintain the supremacy of goodness and justice and guarantee the protection of the lawful rights of all members of society (Abd Rashid, 2013).

The public role of Islam creates an opportunity for movements to situate in the already accepted narrative of religion as a social tool. For example, religious movement in Egypt has positioned *Isla* as a solution to the problem of government corruption (J. Beck, 2009).

God's message has been preserved and made known publicly through centuries; and no human being can add to it or detract from it. The ideology of Islam is not totalitarian. It does not dictate details that dominate every moment or make an imperative for any human thought and move, nor does it claim to provide a definitive prescription in advance for every specific problem that may emerge at any time in the future (Osman, n.y).

*Siyasah syariah* can be divided to atleast four terms. First, *siyasah dusturiyyah*, which is related to *siyasah tasyri'iyyah* (installing the law), *siyasah qadhaiyyah* (judgment), and *siyasah idariyyah* (administration). This *siyasah* is related to how to form the government and also the right of society individually and collectively and any relationship between the leader and the public. Second, *siyasah dawliyyah*, which is related to the relationship among the nations, and Moslems and non-Moslems in a country, etc. Third, *siyasah maliyyah*, which is related to the rights of poor, distribution of welfare, and banking. And, forth, *siyasah harbiyyah*, which is related to the aspects of war and peace (Suyuthi, 1997). The ruler in Islam, according to 'Ali Jarisyah as quoted Moh. Fauzi, (Moh. Fauzi, 2008) should focus on four pillars: *aqidah*, *akhlaq*, *syiar*, and law practicing. These should be implemented well as the foundation in Islam.

One of the important theories in *siyasa syar'iiyah* is *hisbah*. *Hisbah* is to command the good things and forbid the bad ones as Allah mentions in Qs. Ali 'Imran/3: 104. *Hisbah* is related to three issues: to command someone to do the things related to Allah's rights, to the good things related to human rights, and to the things related to the rights between Allah's and human beings' (al-Mawardi, 2006).

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The method applied in this study is distributing the questionnaire to the respondents, including the religious leaders. The number of the respondents was 76 persons from Islam, Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, and Buddha. Data were taken in April 2016. Some of the leaders were interviewed as well as some members of Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (Interreligious Harmony Forum/FKUB) of Aceh Province.

The techniques of data collection included questionnaire, interview, and Focus Group Discussion. Here, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to each respondent. The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions dividing into three research questions. The questionnaire used the Likert scale with the following format: score of 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neither agree nor disagree, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree.

The interview was conducted with several leaders in Aceh; among others were religious leaders, academicians and the chief of Religion Comparison.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1 The current condition of religious adherents' harmony in Aceh**

Harmonization within religious followers is the principle for the construction and development of Aceh. For this item, about 69.7 percent of the respondents answered strongly agree while the rest 15.7 percent agreed. Here, it is indicated that the religious leaders were aware of the importance of the harmonization among religious adherents. This finding was supported by the statement from Priest (Pendeta) Nokon (2016), the leader of Protestant church. He said there was no serious problem in terms of living harmoniously in Aceh, more especially in Sabang, a municipality in Aceh. Moreover, there is a good interaction which has been built here including in Syukuran (expressing gratitude to God) Party. This shows that Aceh has developed a good relationship and interaction among diverse religion followers.

Harmonization is one of the significant factors to build the better province as well as the nation. In the view of *siyasaḥ syar'iiyah*, harmonization is closer to *maslahah* (public interest) that needs to be built for the public prosperity. One cannot live better if one lives in a conflict area, no matter what type of conflict is. The religion-induced conflict is usually more sensitive and can potentially enhance and affect other cases.

Again, the protection which the state must grant to the citizens is not limited to the tangible factors for their existence, such as the person and possession, but must be extended to their dignity and honor, and the privacy of their homes as well (Asad, 2007). The state has a responsibility to protect its citizens from any bothering so they can live peacefully. The state stabilization can be measured with the condition in the province, in this context is Aceh.

Generally, the harmonization of the religious adherents in Aceh is quite stable even though with a little dynamic. It is known from the responses of the religious leaders on the condition of current Aceh. They agreed that Aceh was generally considered stable, although there were some dynamic relationships happened. However, such small cases could not make Aceh become a religion-based conflict area. As many as 68.5% of the religious leaders agreed that Aceh is a harmonious place for their followers while 15.7% of them strongly agreed. About only 1.1 % disagreed with the statement. To conclude, the religious leaders perceived Aceh as a stable province for inter- and intra- religious adherents.

In Islamic history, one of the factors to upgrade the condition of Madinah, which was called as *civilized town*, was stability. The Messenger p.b.u.h made several agreements with the different tribes and religious adherents in order to keep and sustain the peaceful condition. The issue that should be propagated here is to upgrade the understanding among the religious adherents inter- and intra- community. Here, the role of the government is very important in conditioning the area to be better and harmonious.

*Siyasaḥ syar'iiyah* emphasizes the leaders to take important actions so that the society can live peacefully and implement their own beliefs without any bothering. Aceh has a great potential to build and develop the society to be better and prosperous. It, however, needs a synergic relationship especially among the followers of different religions. In this respect, the government has an obligation to make sure that the society is able to perform their worship (*ibadah*) according to their beliefs and faiths as mentioned in *Undang-undang Dasar* (The Basic Bill of Indonesia) 1945 Article 29.



The religious leaders play a very important role. Professor A. Hamid Sarong (2016), deputy chief of FKUB Aceh Province said the religious leaders should strengthen their followers on what the teachings of their religion were, and not mixed with other understanding. If the *ummah* well understand the teachings of their religions, they will be able to learn how to properly live individually as well as collectively.

Idaman Simbering (2016), one of the Protestant leaders, said the participation of religious leaders started from the low level for conditioning the harmonization. The participation was initiated by themselves, not because of the invitation or support from the government.

The stability of Aceh is not only for making the place peaceful for any worship but also for enhancing the economic value. It is because the investors will be attracted to invest here once the situation is conducive. The investment will need a large number of workers, and thus, this situation will enhance the economic prosperity in Aceh.

The harmonization in Aceh can be established because each religion teaches its *ummah* on the issue. This statement is used to show how far the function of the teachings of each religion regarding the harmonious life. The respondents agreed with the statement that the religions teach the *ummah* for harmonization. It is shown from a figure of 44.9% agreed and 30.3% strongly agreed. On the other hand, 5.6% were neutral, 2.2% chose disagree, and 1.1% gave no answer. A. Hamid Sarong (2016) also said that the understanding of the *ummah* about their religions has led to living more harmoniously.

The leaders' perspective had rejected the idea that religion was the source of conflict. The leaders of religions admitted that it was hard to teach people how to interact with each other. Even so, Islam still teaches its *ummah* how to appreciate each other. In this case, Islam introduces three types of brotherhood: *islamiyyah* (internal relationship), *insaniyyah* (external relationship), and *'alamiyyah* (relationship for all creatures). The leaders argued that when conflict occurred, we could not blame any individual, however, there were causes behind the conflict such as economic, political, or social issues.

As the *locus classic* us of pluralism, Indonesia is also a place where a variety of socio-culture develops, as well as where social conflicts emerge. During 1990s, social conflicts happened in the form of atrocities, separatism, demonstration and many others, which were caused by two factors: the polarization of social economy and the lack of comprehensive understanding of the religion (Syamsul, 2002).

The religious leaders in Aceh have an important role to build harmonization among the people. For this statement, the respondents agreed about 37.1% and 48.3% strongly agreed. It can be seen that the leaders were aware of their position in the society. The government and the society as a whole really need their contribution to build a harmonious *ummah*.

As previously discussed, the leaders should make a rule to keep stabilized the society. The rule could be based on *firasat* (sensitivity of thought), *amarat* (the symbols and characters), and *qara'in* (the hidden indications). In Aceh context, the leaders of religions could show *qara'in* as a consideration in *qanun* (the Aceh regional by laws).

The leaders have first hand information and issues, which can be a good source to find the root problem of the *ummah*. They become the middle persons to transfer the aspirations of their *ummah* to the government to be used as a consideration in planning the short-, medium-, and long-term programs.

### 3.2 The factors leading to disharmony among the adherents in Aceh

The unstable economic condition among the newcomers and the locals who have different religion backgrounds may be one of the disharmonized causes. The leaders saw the economic factor was not too dominant to disrupt the harmonious life in Aceh. However, 30.3% of them agreed and 12.4% strongly agreed that economy contributed in the emergence of the conflict. Meanwhile, 24.7% of them disagreed that the economic was the disharmonized factor. The rest of 18.0% were neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

As previously stated, there are two important factors in building the country: *syura* (consultation) and *ridha* (pleasure). Both are intangible. The current Aceh condition should be "healed" by the *ruhiyyah* (spiritual) approach, and not just by the material aspects. The Acehnese economy after the tsunami was better. Yet, it was not able to stop the conflict in Aceh i.e., the social and religion-induced cases. Therefore, the government should use the persuasive method in order to build *acivilized society*, one of which is through the religious approach.

According to *siyasah syar'iiyah*, the religious leaders are the *wali* (protector and helper) whom Allah has granted them a trust as the vicegerent, authority agent, but not the owner (Black, 2006). These leaders should be more responsive to the problems happened within the *ummah*. In this regard, the members of the FKUB should also be more effective. Yet, in fact, 80 % of the forum could not work in the regency. The FKUB would only be considered

by the regent once the conflict occurred. This was because the members of the FKUB were not very active and only gave the consideration to the regent and the governor to prevent any possible problems. Nevertheless, data such as mapping of conflict or mapping of harmonization should be hold by the members of the FKUB (Safrilsyah, 2016).

The importance of social organization and any religious institution was to help the government to build the harmonization in Aceh. The informal institutions are sometimes more effective in forming a civilized society and a good relationship with each other. Here, the government should invite all the elements of the society and organizations to support the harmonization among the *ummah* in Aceh.

Another point of disharmony is the difference of cultures and customs. This was what the religious leaders predominantly perceived. About 52% of the leaders agreed with the statement and 12% strongly agreed. It is known that culture and customs could impact the stabilization of the society. About 19.1 % of the leaders disagreed with this statement. In conclusion, the culture should be preserved and should make the society understand one another. Since the motto of Indonesia is called “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika”--unity in diversity, the government should ensure that the more the cultures are, the richer they contribute to the country.

Culture is an important identity and an effective approach to solve any problem. How about different cultures? When Moslems first came to Aceh, they experienced a strong local tradition. One of the ways to introduce Islam to the locals at the time was by having a spiritual (Sufism) trend. Then, a long, continuous interaction and acculturation occurred between them. At that point, the locals were not only Islamized but the Islamic religion was also indigenized. Naturally, the degree and extent of symbiotic assimilation varied from place to place and from one community to another. This tradition continues up to the present and affects the way Islam has been accepted and practiced by the people (Nur Ahmad, 2000).

Furthermore, the local conditions and ethnic traditions were in the process of assimilation and co-optation with the incoming Islamic religious and legal doctrines. In Aceh, for example, Islamic law had been the law of the country and the *adat* (customary traditions) became an integral part of it. However in some other parts, this process of interaction had created tension or even conflict. Some conflicts had been accelerated by power and political interests or outside interference (Nur Ahmad, 2000).

However, what disrupted the harmonization the most among the adherents of religions was the external factors. According the leaders, the external factors played an important role to disharmonize the society. The external factors here referred to the things which were not expected by the society to happen. About 47.4% of the respondents agreed with this statement, and 2.1% strongly agreed. However, about 10.5% of them disagreed and 1.3% strongly disagreed. Meanwhile, 19.7% of them neither agreed nor disagreed.

This was the reality found in such a conflict. This condition exactly led people to be an open society, that the society was based on the recognition that the world is inherently imperfect (Soros, 2000). Each individual wanted to do something to bother and make the other uncomfortable. To this, the leaders have been aware of such situation and thus let the *ummah* be aware of it, too. By doing so, it is expected that the conflict among the people could be prevented and avoided.

In regard to that, the government should anticipate such cases so that any conflict could be avoided in the future. Conflict is inevitably the cause of destruction to the human life in short and long time period. The society should understand that the development of the state can be well run if the harmonious condition is maintained.

### **3.3 The role of religious leaders in forming the harmonization in Aceh**

The role of religious leaders was not very optimal in Aceh for the harmonization to realize within the religious adherents. On the question whether or not the religious leaders spent more time for the harmonization among the religious adherents in Aceh, 56.8% of the respondents said they did not. Meanwhile, 13.5% strongly agreed with this item. In this regard, when the conflicts occurred inter- or intra- religion, the leaders took no strategic position to solve the problem.

According to Safrilsyah (2016), to date, Aceh has been very harmonized and ready to live together with other different faiths. This was supported by the activity that taught the Acehnese how to live side by side with others as what has been done by Religious Affairs Office and Kesbangpol as well as the FKUB. If the government did not provide with the relevant activities, it would mean a disharmonious life within the society.

However, the religious leaders have actively participated to solve conflict of religions in Aceh according to 18.9% of the respondents, and 1.4% strongly supported that the leaders have made more concrete actions for the conflict while 2.7% of them had no answer for this.

A number of the horizontal conflicts at several places in Aceh had little contribution of the religious leaders. This statement supported the previous discussion. There were conflicts occurred in Aceh several times which were religion-based conflicts. The emergence of horizontal conflicts according to respondents was because the leaders of religions have not taken a serious action to handle the issues. The respondents agreed with this statement at about 57.9% and 13.2% strongly agreed. Yet, 15.8% of them disagreed and 3.9% strongly disagreed.

What the religion leaders did was to make the *ummah* aware of the importance of living together in accordance with the religious teachings. This was closer to the understanding of the *ummah* since the spiritual aspect touched the individuals better than the others.

The current roles of the religious leaders are only giving advice and guiding the followers to the importance of harmonization. On this statement, about 57.9% agreed and 26.3% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 10.5% disagreed and 2.6% strongly disagreed. The rest 13.1% of them said they have given sufficient contribution to avoid the conflict in Aceh.

In the Quran, the importance of advice and reminding the others is explicitly stated: to remind *tanfa'* (gave the benefit) anyone to believe. Therefore, advice is a crucial point. Moreover, the leaders have to sustain a good condition of the *ummah*. The *nass* asks people to work hard in order to make the people aware of how huge the importance of harmonious life for them is.

In *siyasa syar'iiyah*, the leaders have an obligation to *amar 'maruf nahy munkar* (invite to the good things and avoid the bad things). What they have done today is precisely good. *Ma'ruf* is the normal things in human life and does not contradict the good habits. Something should be done here is to normalize the condition in Aceh. Historians have claimed that Aceh was a very conducive place to live during the days of *Sultanate*. Many religions lived well. According to the chief of the FKUB Aceh, Ziauddin, a proof that Aceh accommodated multicultural living is Gampong Peunayong. Peunayong in previous days was the village where many Chinese lived and among them were Christians, Protestants, Hindus, as well as Buddhists. Besides, churches and monasteries are ever standing from long time ago (Ziauddin, 2016).

In this case, the leaders can have some administration to give more attention to public affairs (i.e., harmonization) and when such a regulation is made, the society will need to obey (Zallum, 2002). The role of the government is to sustain the condition and to keep

harmonization through *Qanun* which ensures that each religious adherent has the right to perform any worship based on their respective faiths.

To date, the government does not invite the religious leaders for the harmonization issue in Indonesia. If the government invites all religious leaders for this issue, the government should also be present and cooperate with the religious leaders because after all the government has a share of responsibility in this (Hamis, 2016).

Till now, the local government – according the religious leaders- has not given serious concern to them in order to build the harmonization among the religious adherents. About 50% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 21.3% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 13.3% disagreed and 1.3 strongly disagreed. The rest in doubt reached 13.3 %.

The religious leaders are needed by the local government to be listened to their opinion in sustaining the harmonization. According to the leaders, their opinions are very important for the government to accommodate the harmonization among the *ummah*. 69.7% of them strongly agreed with the idea and 30.3% agreed.

What happened in Singkil showed that the contribution of the government and the religious leaders was necessary for preventing the conflict. Here, it is clear the government or any related institution was not ready to face such a problem. The disharmony appeared was because the adherents were less appreciative towards each other or, in other words, they were not ready to learn that there were many schools of thoughts in one religion. As a result, the dispute over the authority of the mosque, the cane issue, and the pulpit case had happened (Safrilsyah, 2016).

According to *Siyasah al-Syar'iiyyah*, the leaders have a high position to handle their *ummah*. They also have to be held responsible for the problem caused by their *ummah's* negligence. Therefore, the government should call all leaders of religions to take care and pay attention to the problems and cases experienced by the *ummah*. It is relevant to the hadith in which the Prophet p.b.u.h said that “each of you is a leader and each leader takes responsibility of what he/she leads”.

For the minority, the duties of the religious leader are: to teach, to lead, and to protect. These are also the responsibilities of the religion leaders. As for the problem in Aceh which involved the minority, especially the Christians, there is no enough information as of now. So, it can be perceived that they still do not support the rule. The government has a responsibility to socialize the rule to all levels of the society such as *Qanun* or other regulations. Only by doing

so, the Protestant leaders and all adherents can understand and support the harmonization (Idaman, 2016).

#### **4. Conclusions**

The harmonization among religions in Aceh has been built since the time of the Aceh Sultanate. Over time, a number of dynamic changes happened in Aceh due to various problems, i.e., social interaction, economy, and others. In this regard, one of the important aspects to maintain the harmony is the presence of the religious leaders, who are considered to have vast understanding on their respective religions and the characteristics of their followers.

In the leaders' view, Aceh today is still in harmony and the relationship inter- and intra-religious followers is also good, as well as the relationship with the government. However, the disharmony among the adherents in Aceh was dominantly caused by the external factors although the internal aspects such as economy, culture, and politics were also involved. Further, it is found that the work of the religious leaders is not optimal yet in maintaining the harmonization among religious adherents in Aceh. The only influential role they did was giving advice to the society to live in harmony with one another.

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